

John 8:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

Analysis

Which of you convinceth me of sin? Jesus issues an extraordinary challenge: *elegchō* (έλέγχω) means to convict, expose, prove guilty—Jesus demands His accusers produce evidence of sin in His life. This unprecedented claim to sinlessness stands alone in Scripture. No prophet, priest, or king ever dared such a challenge. Moses struck the rock in anger (Numbers 20:11-12), David committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11), Peter denied Christ (Luke 22:54-62)—but Jesus stands without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22).

And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? The conditional "if" (εἰ/ei) assumes the reality—"since I speak truth" (first class condition). Jesus connects His sinlessness to His truthfulness: a sinless life validates His words. The question "why" (διὸ τί/dia ti)—literally "on account of what"—demands they examine their motives. If they cannot convict Him of sin, and He speaks truth, what rational basis exists for unbelief?

This verse establishes Christ's unique authority. Unlike false prophets who mixed truth with error, or holy men who spoke God's word despite personal failure, Jesus's perfect character authenticated His perfect teaching. As the sinless God-man, He alone could claim, "I am the truth" (14:6).

Historical Context

In Jewish law, accusations required two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Jesus's challenge invited His opponents to produce evidence, but they responded with slander instead (v.48), calling Him a demon-possessed Samaritan. Their inability to cite a single sin exposed their charges as baseless.

The religious leaders had been watching Jesus for years, seeking grounds for accusation (Luke 6:7, John 5:16). They examined His Sabbath observance, table fellowship, handling of tradition, claims about Himself. Despite intense scrutiny from hostile critics, they found nothing—because there was nothing to find. Even Pilate, after trial, declared, "I find no fault in him" (19:4).

Jesus's sinlessness was essential for atonement. The sacrificial lamb must be "without blemish" (Exodus 12:5, Leviticus 22:21). Only a sinless substitute could bear others' sins (Isaiah 53:9, 1 Peter 2:22-24). This challenge demonstrated His qualification as the Lamb of God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus's sinless life teach us about God's holiness and the seriousness of sin?
2. How does Christ's perfect obedience where we have failed give us confidence in His substitutionary atonement?
3. Why is it significant that Jesus's enemies, despite intense scrutiny, could not produce evidence of sin?

Interlinear Text

τίς	ἐξ	ὑμῶν	ἐλέγχει	με	περὶ	ἀμαρτίας;	εἰ	δὲ
Which	of	you	convinceth	me	of	sin	if	And
G5101	G1537	G5216	G1651	G3165	G4012	G266	G1487	G1161
ἀλήθειαν	λέγω,	διατί	ὑμεῖς	οὐ	πιστεύετέ	μοι;		
the truth	I say	why	ye	not	believe	me		
G225	G3004	G1302	G5210	G3756	G4100	G3427		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:15 (Sin): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Mark 11:31 (Faith): And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

Matthew 21:25 (Faith): The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

John 8:7 (Sin): So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

John 14:30 (Parallel theme): Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.